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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, January 17, 1936

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Subject: "HAPPY ENDINGS" Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,  
United States Department of Agriculture.

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In spite of all the advice offered to us housewives these days, in spite of all the menus and recipes and food hints and what not that we get over the air and in print, the same old problems have a way of coming up and catching us unprepared. And one of these is dessert.

Now maybe you are one of those clever women who can always think of just the right dessert for any meal. Or maybe you serve pie one day and ice cream the next and let the dessert problem go at that. Or maybe you don't eat desserts. If so, this conversation is not for you. I would have words with the lady who now and then has her troubles with meal endings, who knows how it feels to sit with pencil in hand trying to work out a menu when she has no inspiration for dessert, who has plenty of ideas to start the meal but none to finish it. "Oh, for a different dessert for Saturday night." "My kingdom for something good to top off Sunday dinner!" "And, what, oh, what shall I fix for my Sunday-night-supper guests?"

Dessert-jitters -- that's what I call this state of mind. And those jitters will get you if you don't watch out. A good way of avoiding them, in my opinion, is to make some lists of desserts for different needs. And keep these lists handy in the kitchen to turn to in moments of desperation, or -- to add to every time you get a new dessert idea.

For example, you might have one list of hearty desserts -- the kind men with a big appetite want for their winter meals, the kind that make a good substantial ending to a light first course. A list of hearty desserts will include high-calorie endings such as pies and rich cakes, rich steamed and baked puddings, and so on. It might include gingerbread served with whipped cream or cream cheese; baked Indian pudding with whipped cream; chocolate bread pudding; baked and steamed puddings served with hard sauce; pineapple upside-down cake; apple pie topped with melted cheese; mince pie and so on. Nothing very new about any dessert there. But that list may save the day when your menu needs a substantial ending and you can't think of one.

Then, another useful list is a collection of light endings. After a first course of rich meat and gravy, of potatoes, and hot rolls and so on, the happy ending will be the light attractive one. Here's the list that includes the fruit and gelatin desserts, the sherbets, ices, and so on. Many dainty attractive light desserts come to my mind's eye right now -- chilled fruit cup;



and jellied grapes or other jellied fruit; baked apples or bananas; apricot whip; lemon sponge; apple float; cranberry sherbet; and such light cake as angel food, sponge cake or thin crisp wafers.

On a busy day when you are in a rush, a list of quick desserts will help you out. Such a hurry-up list might include: broiled canned peaches or bananas; chocolate or gingerbread waffles; fruit in whipped cream; a mixture of candied ginger, marshmallows and whipped cream; and other quick sweets that you have heard about from time to time.

The forehanded cook will also want a list of day-before desserts -- the kind you can make the day before and forget about until serving time. These include the frozen mixtures -- mousses, sherbets, parfaits and plain ice cream. They include all the gelatin desserts and the various kinds of ice-box cake. They also include cake and some pies.

If you are cooking for children, you will ~~find~~ find a list of good children's desserts handy. Such a list includes the good milk and egg puddings, fruit desserts, and cereal desserts. But the list will avoid all pies, cakes, and puddings that are too sweet, too heavy in fat, or too highly spiced. Some of the possibilities for your children's dessert list are: stewed and baked fruit; fresh fruit mixtures like sliced oranges and bananas; fruit whip; rice pudding; cornstarch pudding; tapioca pudding; custards; gelatin molds; and sponge or angel food cake and oatmeal cookies or other cookies that are not too rich.

If you believe in being thrifty with your cooking gas or electricity, you'll use a list of oven desserts to good advantage. Then, when you plan a baked dish for the first part of the meal, you can use that oven to capacity by a baked dessert. On that list of oven desserts, keep note of the oven temperature needed, whether slow, medium, or hot. Then, when you are baking potatoes, or a meat loaf, where you use a medium oven, you can also bake a dessert like scalloped apples or fig pudding that also needs a medium oven. If you are using a hot oven, broiled peaches may be the dessert that fits the temperature best. And if it is a very slow oven choose a slow-baking dessert like rice pudding or Indian pudding.

Finally, every woman needs a list of company desserts -- those special endings to serve at guest meals, those that require a little extra fussing or a little extra expense, those that are extra good-looking, or a bit unusual. For this time of year, you might include on this list an unusual pie like California open-pie which has a filling of mixed dried fruits and candied cherries. Or it might include any of the desserts that combine whipped cream and gelatin, like charlotte russe or Bavarian cream. Frozen desserts also suit many company menus. And for something a little different in the homemade ice-cream line, you might list peppermint ice cream or peanut brittle ice cream, or plain vanilla with some special hot sauce. You probably have your own favorite company desserts to add to such a list. I'm just suggesting that if you collect all good possibilities, one glance will at the list remind you of all of them.

So, listeners, before you let the dessert problem get you down, or before you feed your family pie the year around because you can't think of anything else for dessert, have a try at this simple plan of dessert-lists. Yours for happy meal endings.

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